

PASSION IN A NEW DIMENSION

— John P. Sisk

THE
Commonweal



Sit *This* One Out?

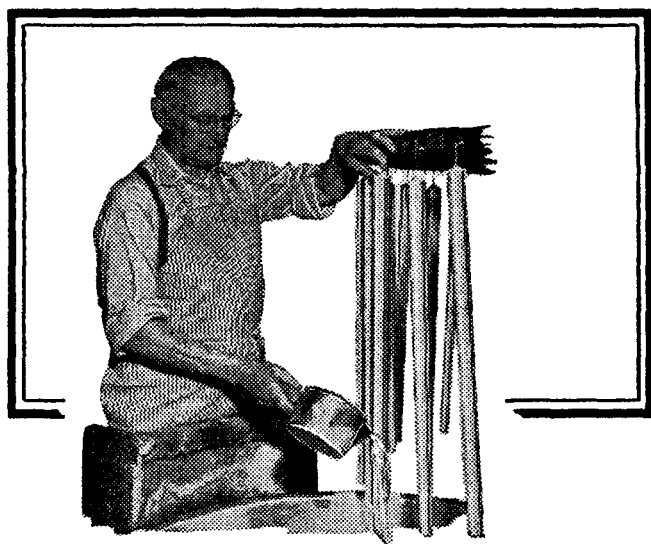
A PERSONAL MANIFESTO

by Milton Mayer

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THE Commonweal

week by week

THE NEED FOR UNDERSTANDING

THE current disaffection between America and Europe is little short of tragic. Channels of communication are more numerous than ever before. Tourism has reached a new apex thanks to overseas flying. Foreign language editions of American mass-circulation periodicals are reaching more and more people across the Atlantic. American Houses are heavily patronized in a number of German cities. The manifold activities of the UN provide a wide range of personal contacts. Yet there appears to be little mutual understanding.

Europe's anti-Americanism could hardly come at a more unpropitious moment. Discussion of a non-aggression pact with Russia is in the offing. Also, West Germany is speedily emerging as the Continent's dominant power. Her neighbors and former victims are understandably worried. The future of NATO and the Schuman Plan is at stake. It is therefore essential that Germany's new-found strength be integrated into the organization of Western Europe as a whole. A certain progress has been made toward a West European Union. But the nations hesitate; their vehement anti-Americanism (and the fear of being ground between two great rivals) casts a damper on their hopes and plans.

If recent happenings in this country have accentuated Europe's mistrust of the United States, it is underpinned by certain basic misconceptions. The peoples of the Latin countries, wedded to abstract ideas and doctrinaire formulas, have clichés to match our own. To them capitalism means only one thing: their own brand of low-wage, restricted-production enterprise, in which the gulf between wealthy owners and hard-pressed employees leads straight to a class war mentality. To them American capitalism is virtually the same as the capitalism under which they have no real status and an unending struggle for subsistence. Such a view is all the more understandable in the light of this country's big business and enviable wealth.

There is greater justification for Europeans' aversion to America's open pursuit of material gain and comfort, to our overemphasis on mechanical

gadgets and canned amusements, to our predilection for such brash commodities as hot dogs, bubble gum and the stridencies of Tin Pan Alley. But in their ignorance the European peoples fail to take compensating factors into account. Many of our kitchen gadgets, for example, simply free the busy housewife and mother from fatiguing drudgery; despite the inanities of standard TV fare, the new medium shows signs of a more intelligent approach. The legend of a materialistic America also leaves out entirely the idealism which motivates much of our private and professional life.

It is in the light of such distortions and misconceptions, for which we ourselves are much to blame, that European reactions to recent happenings must be viewed. One reason the Rosenberg Case alienated so many Europeans, for example, was that they saw the verdict as the result of sheer anti-Communist hysteria—not realizing that unshakable confidence in our judicial processes had much to do with the lack of widespread public protest here. Likewise in their ignorance of the American political system (and on the basis of the capsule, garbled despatches in their newspapers) the people of Europe ascribe to Senator McCarthy a dictatorial power hardly consonant with the facts.

THESE two developments have been most responsible for the rise of anti-Americanism in recent months. But consider the reverse side of the coin. Ignorance of Europe leads to disdain, an impatience that is all too often reflected in American comment and negotiations. The popular American idea of Europe fails to take sufficiently into account the devastating and debilitating effects of two long wars, the comparative proximity of Russian tanks and air bases or the arduous daily struggle for existence on the Continent. It fails to recognize that it is a spirit of protest that leads to millions of votes for Communist candidates in France and Italy. American opinion too often overlooks what Europeans have achieved culturally and in the art of liv-

ing. Europe, with its sense of values, is still the well-spring of Western civilization.

Much remains to be done to build up mutual understanding. Unhappily, however, the modest post-war efforts in this direction are falling victim to economies. The Voice of America is in a sadly reduced state. A few weeks ago the State Department closed down its *Neue Zeitung* in Frankfurt, which had attained a circulation of two hundred thousand and had come to be respected as the best newspaper in Germany. These are false economies indeed; somehow or other the tide must be reversed. Meanwhile all non-governmental agencies devoted to cultural interchange should redouble their activity. For on the wholehearted cooperation of Europe and America hangs the fate of our world.

THE SHOCK OF RECOGNITION

THE "mystery of iniquity" has been made so tangible in modern history that many of us, in self-defense, have learned not to see it. We are not easily shocked. The stench of Buchenwald has conditioned us to terrible things.

And then something happens that renews our sense of outrage. In some single instance the *fact* of human depravity is again made immediate, and we relearn the innocence of shame.

For many Americans the kidnaping and murder of six-year-old Bobby Greenlease was this single

instance. Reading of the brutal death of this little boy they rediscovered outrage; they knew an almost physical sickness that such things could be.

In such outrage, in such sickness, the first remedy to suggest itself is revenge. No retribution, it seems, could be too great for men capable of this act. The ordinary channels of justice seem hopelessly inadequate to their wickedness, the ordinary punishments absurdly lenient for their crime.

And so John O'Donnell, the Washington correspondent for the New York *Daily News*, has proposed that in the case of such criminals the Constitutional prohibition against "cruel and unusual punishments" be repealed. For murderous-kidnapers he suggests the State inflict: "cruel and unusual punishment, as prolonged as medical skill can accomplish and as ferocious and merciless as tales of ancient torture can conceive." He believes that such vengeance "imposed publicly before all criminals and suspects in Yankee Stadium and brought by TV to every reformatory, jail house and parole board hearing room, might instill some restraining fear of inevitable punishment."

One's guess, on first reading Mr. O'Donnell's column, might be that he is attempting to double as Jonathan Swift; that his advice is intended as a modern "Modest Proposal." But, on reflection, this seems unlikely. It would be too wild a departure from Mr. O'Donnell's usual approach. He is not in the Swift tradition. He is probably literally serious.

If he is, one can almost understand why. Confronted by the monstrous, as in this murder, we tend to become monstrous. That is part of our tragedy. But we usually react from our own worst reactions. We remember, in time, the elementary lessons of civilization.

It is well that we remember. Otherwise, in a case like the murder of Bobby Greenlease, all would be lost. In the shock of recognizing human depravity, we would ourselves extend it.

THE PRESIDENT AND THE BOMB

THE Dwight D. Eisenhower who appeared recently before the United Church Women of the National Council of Churches of Christ spoke as more than the head of the Republican party or even the President of the United States. In a very real sense his remarks on the horrors of atomic warfare transcended these offices, and he spoke for every man, of whatever party or nation, who has ever shuddered at such a prospect.

It was unfortunate that the President's speech coincided with a rash of conflicting statements from various Washington officials on the subject of

NEXT WEEK

THOMAS MERTON writes of the poetry of the Psalms in the Fall Book Number.

"A truly religious poem is not born merely of a religious purpose. Neither poetry nor contemplation is built out of good intentions. Indeed, a poem that springs from no deeper spiritual need than a devout intention will necessarily appear to be at the same time forced and tame. Art that is simply "willed" is not art, and it tends to have the same disquieting effect upon the reader as forced piety and religious strain in those who are trying hard to be contemplatives, as if infused contemplation were the result of human effort rather than a gift of God. It seems to me that such poetry were better not written. It tends to confirm unbelievers in their suspicion that religion deadens instead of nurtures all that is vital in the spirit of man. The Psalms, on the other hand, are at the same time the simplest and the greatest of all religious poems."

Russia and the H-bomb. For a few days it almost seemed as if these statements were specifically designed to show that on the subject of the bomb there was not even partisan agreement among fellow-Republicans, let alone bipartisan unanimity. So confusing were these contradictory statements that eventually the President himself had to clarify the situation in a press conference, declaring officially that the Soviet Union was in fact capable of delivering an atomic attack on us and that this capacity would increase with the passage of time.

With that point clearly settled, sober thought should be devoted to the President's Atlantic City address on the subject. If he disclosed nothing new about atomic power, what we know already is amply terror-inspiring. As President Eisenhower pointed out, atomic war could bring to the world "sudden and mass destruction, erasure of cities, the possible doom of every nation and society." Technical data about the bomb could hardly add to the horror of what we already know about its destructive possibilities. All that is needed is the realization that the horror that was Hiroshima, multiplied a thousand times, can happen to our own cities.

Awareness of our peril does not mean we should turn to appeasement, if only because experience has shown that along the road of appeasement lies not peace but war. Readiness to explore every path to peace, however, short of compromising principles, should not be confused with appeasement.

The task ahead of us, as President Eisenhower pointed out, is one that requires courage, patience, knowledge and leadership. Trying to reach a workable and enforceable agreement with the Russians on international control of atomic weapons has in the past led to one frustration after another. But we should never give up our efforts to prevent other, and more horrible, Hiroshimas.

LOCARNO, NEW AND OLD

THE cold war has been for these past eight years like an unexploded bomb lying in the heart of a city. There have been a few unsuccessful attempts to dismantle it, and now a new attempt has begun.

Sir Winston Churchill began the new attempt with his famous speech in the House of Commons May 11th, suggesting that "the master thought which animated Locarno might well play its part between Germany and Russia. . . ."

The idea has, in the intervening months, gained a good deal of support. It is regarded as a new stroke that might break the shackles of the cold war—and that, of course, is its great attraction.

The Locarno Pact was a set of documents signed

in 1925. The principal one guaranteed Franco-German and German-Belgian boundaries and was signed by Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain and Italy. Its significant point was to state that if Germany attacked France, Britain would stand with France, and if France attacked Germany, Britain would stand with Germany. It was an ingenious arrangement, but in spite of it, war came.

In the world of 1953, a "Locarno" pact could mean that the present national boundaries of Europe would be guaranteed by all signatory nations. A violation of the pact would bring retaliatory action by all of the other pact nations. Another, more limited interpretation of the idea in modern context, would be a guarantee of German-East European borders.

What would the advantages be of an arrangement along these lines? If Russia is genuinely worried about German or American aggression, it would reassure her. It would give her reason and opportunity to withdraw her troops from the satellite nations (if she wants to withdraw them). In short, if Russia wishes to be peaceable, to ease up on the aggressive policies which she claims are her defense against the West, this pact would enable her to do so without losing face.

Such a pact would undeniably alter the present stalemate, and possibly lead to further negotiation and other settlements. And an offer of negotiation for such a pact would force the Russians to put up or shut up, and would have a useful effect on public opinion.

Unfortunately, however, the idea of a new Locarno rests on some suppositions which are highly arguable, to put it mildly. One is the supposition that the present Soviet government really is interested in easing tension in Europe and really would withdraw its troops from Eastern Europe. (Russia might be willing to agree to withdraw if NATO and European Union were abandoned, but that would be like agreeing to attend the funeral if the Western nations commit suicide.)

The second supposition is that paper assurances would mean more to Russia today than they have at any other time since the war. Experience would indicate that the Russians respond only to what once were called "situations of strength." If she actually fears aggression from the West, would she be comforted by a pact? And, to ask the final and most troubling questions, can we really agree to "freeze" present borders? And would not a new Locarno influence the West away from mutual security towards complacency?

Other questions can be asked; other answers can be offered. This much of a comment indicates that all is not so simple.

THE PACIFISTS

ANYONE who was influenced by the Catholic Worker movement, as I was, must have given more than a few thoughts to the claims of the pacifists. Since the beginning of the CW, in 1933, the paper has taken a thorough-going pacifist position. At first it was an abstract position and not particularly unpopular. If you had gone out on the streets in the early thirties and asked people where they stood on the question of war, probably five out of six would have expressed some kind of pacifist sentiment.

I don't think any general could have been elected President of the United States while that mood was on the people. (Hoover, a Quaker actually was.) The man who bluntly stated that there are times when war might be justified under certain circumstances was more likely to shock than the complete pacifist. We thought we had everything figured out in those days: the munition-makers brought on wars for their own personal profit and only saps fell for the flag waving in the breeze, the bugle-call piercing the clean air and the Uncle Sam Needs YOU! signs. This was the general mood when the *Catholic Worker* first began to talk about Christian pacifism—which is quite a different thing from the cynical pacifism that dominated the popular thinking of the time. In those headline years just about everything evil was blamed on the bosses and bankers. Shaw's "Major Barbara" offered the explanation of war almost universally accepted. Pacifism of the Oxford Oath kind was in vogue.

But it was not long before the *Catholic Worker's* position ceased to be popular. There was a war in Spain, and the two kinds of readers the *Worker* attracted—run-of-the-mill Catholics and run-of-the-mill liberals—both felt that something precious hinged on the outcome there. Both groups had committed themselves—the one to the cause of General Franco, the other to the cause of the Loyalists. The days of restful pacifism were over. And the *Worker* people were caught in the cross-fire. While co-religionists accused them of being callously indifferent to the murder of bishops, priests and nuns in Spain and hardly fit to stay in the company of good Catholics, liberals and leftists were horrified by their picketing "Blockade," a popular movie made as propaganda for the Loyalist cause.

In time, the problem became even more immediate. There was a draft, there was Pearl Harbor and America itself was involved in a war. Pacifists had to stand up and be counted, and the *Catholic Worker* stood firm. The paper refused to support the war effort and has continued to preach its pacifist message all these years while flags wave bravely in the breeze and bugles blare. The *Worker* has not always been fair and is often crudely one-sided, of course, (the committed pacifist propagandists, like the rest of us, sometimes get mixed up about ends and means) but the essential thing is that the CW has stood firm. And because it does, the rest of us still have to face up to the pacifist's claims. At least one clear voice, even

today, continues to disturb the harmony of the non-pacifist chorus. I am supposing that, like me, thousands of *Worker*-readers ask themselves from time to time: Could it be that they have the answer?

So far I have never been able to convince myself that they do. I think I have heard all their arguments and I certainly admire their persistence. But maybe for the same obscure psychological reasons that my CW friends remain pacifists, I persistently reject their claims.

In a way I almost envy them. Once you have accepted pacifism, in a sense you *do* have the answers because there are no more questions. You can point to all the horrors of war, for instance, and they are no longer your burden; you can accent the inevitable moral ambiguities in even the just cause—and the non-pacifist is burdened with them; when the nation is conscientiously split over whether to take course A or course B as the possible road to survival, you can reject both courses and point out the evil in each. You can even win every argument because in no time your opponent will have to face up to the H-bomb, the atrocities, the double-talk and double-cross.

These are your advantages if you are a pacifist, but you are a so-and-so if you use them, and few pacifists do. For the pacifist feels guilt, too, and he knows that even though there are questions he can ask his non-pacifist friends, there are also questions they can ask him. Unless the non-pacifist is stupid or cruel he takes it for granted that the pacifist has already questioned himself—as the non-pacifist has questioned himself. It is better all round if the questions remain unspoken by both sides.

The point, if there is one, is that we all see through a glass, darkly. We are burdened with one another and, in the last analysis, all are baffled by the evil in the world—evil on a greater scale than any generation before us has known. One man sees Dachau and is ready to kill or be killed so that this thing will not happen to others. Another sees Dachau and feels that only by laying down his life can he make a start toward putting an end to this evil—or at least that he can diminish the evil by not playing the brute himself. But until we have been killed, or have laid down our life, we are left with Dachau. That is, we are left with the questions.

If we had all been pacifists, would the oven at Dachau still roar? The pacifists may say no, but that is conjecture. Men killed and were killed, and the fires no longer roar; that is fact.

You can't really sit it out. While you're here, you are still involved and you have to keep asking questions. And, please God, there will always be pacifists around to ask them. The "witness" of pacifists bespeaks the doubts that might otherwise be silenced in the rest of us. And without those doubts, I think, we are all lost.

JOHN COGLEY.

Sit This One Out?

ALL THE KING'S HORSES AND ALL THE KING'S MEN COULD NOT DIVERT THE WORLD FROM THE COURSE WHICH HAS BROUGHT IT TO ITS PRESENT PASS; WHAT, THEN, CAN I DO, ONE MAN?

MILTON MAYER

JUST before the Second World War began, I decided to sit it out and said so. ["I Think I'll Sit This One Out!" *Saturday Evening Post*, Oct. 7, 1939.] I was younger then. Now I am older, and they tell me that blood is the milk of old men.

My position fourteen years ago was not religious. I decided against war on rational grounds and proclaimed myself a moral and social revolutionary. War, I thought, required men to violate their moral and social nature and employed, in its own nature, disproportionate means to the ends it pursued. I was sure—so young was I—that the Second World War would fail, like the First, to save the world for democracy.

Although I believed at the time that man's nature is God-given, I did not advance that most certain of arguments but rested my case, rather, on the evidence of things seen. I was not persuasive; the war went forward, ending, at last, in an unconditional victory over the forces of darkness.

I was then, as I am now, a Jew. I was, as I am now, a fellow-traveler of many Christian agencies, but it never occurred to me that I should become a Christian, or even, in a sense, that I should want to. I knew I was not good enough to be a Christian *or* a Jew. But Judaism was stuck with me. And the fact that I was not a good Jew did not entitle me to be a bad Christian. In addition, but by no means incidentally, my faith seemed to me to require that a Jew be a Jew not only in God's eyes and his own, but also in the world's; a point which has to be (and has been) argued elsewhere.

I have not made much progress in these past fourteen years. My prospect of rejection by the armed forces has improved, but I cannot say the same of my prospect of acceptance in higher circles, such as the Empyrean. I have, however, met some interesting people. In a period of national ecstasy my melancholy views had relieved me of some of my business connections, and I found that time was cheaper to come by than business—and very little less profitable, what with taxes and all. I took time to acquaint myself with Holy Writ and with holy men and was drawn, through God's grace, mistaken

identity, or false pretenses, into progressively deeper association with religious activities, Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant.

I DISCOVERED that the Jewish Law permits a man to be peaceable and, indeed, unless God's call to the contrary is clear, requires him to be. I discovered that, for those Jews who read the Law equivocally, Christianity, which came to fulfill the Law, was clear and rigid on the point. "Ye have heard that it hath been said . . . But I say unto. . ."

I discovered that Jesus took the peaceable way, offered it to a young man of flesh and blood, and taught it not only to disciples but to the multitude; that the peaceable Wayfarer was given His armament to carry not by His friends, but by His enemies, and at the end of the way was nailed to it; that the sword and the knout which were spoken of were not the sword of Acheson and Dulles and the knout of Hitler, Stalin, and McCarthy; and that when President Eisenhower, defending his rejection of clemency for the Rosenbergs, said, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," he was quoting a reply to a question asked in wickedness.

If I am wrong about all these things, I am mortally wrong. I know that many who come in Christ's name, with better preparation than mine, are against me. Still, in these fourteen years, I have found support in a very small minority of every communion which professes Christ. And when the World Council of Churches announced, in 1948, that "war is contrary to the will of God," I rejoiced that my view of God's will had found its way into the church councils of this world. But when, in its next breath, the World Council said that there were *three* Christian attitudes toward war, I thought of the words of the Lord to my ancestor Isaiah, "Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels," and of the words of the Lord to my ancestor Zephaniah, "I said, 'Surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive instruction,' but they rose early, and corrupted all their doings." I did not dare to think of what Jesus said of those whom he found in Moses' seat: "Do not ye after their works, for they say, and do not."

Mr. Mayer recently served as visiting faculty member of the Institute for Social Research of Frankfurt University. He is now finishing a book on Germany.

In Catholicism, too, especially in Europe, I found support, even in the Church Fathers; although the doctrine of the just war was widely asserted and very widely accepted among Catholics. Now the "just war" doctrine threw me back to my 1939 position, for justice is a social question.

As I could not see then, so I could not see later how a war could be just which required the injury of the innocent, as all wars did; or how a war could be just in which two unoffending children of God, each with a gun pointed at the back of his head, were compelled to kill one another, as in all wars they were; or how justice could be subjected to the test of violence, as in every war it was. In a word, I could not see how any war, fought for whatever purposes, or with whatever provocation, could be just.

IN the March 2, 1951, issue of *The Commonweal*, Father F. H. Drinkwater, of England, affirmed the following proposition, under the title, "War and Conscience": "War is lawful in a just cause, in which case the citizen must obey the call of his government; and all who wage war are under the obligation of keeping it within the limits of reason, justice, and humanity." "In a just cause," said Father Drinkwater, "means to set right some grave public injustice committed against the natural law, grave enough to be commensurate with the evils inevitably accompanying the use of force." Now I had heard about the natural law. I had not, however, heard that it was guaranteed by governments, but, on the contrary, that it was sometimes blotted out by governments (*Summa Theologica*, Q. XCIV, A. 6 ad 3). I had not heard of a government's calling its citizens to war in a cause which the government said was unjust, and I could even imagine a Catholic's rejecting the call of his government in, say, Communist Russia, to fight in a cause which his government would most assuredly say was just.

All who wage war are under the obligation of keeping it within the limits of reason, justice, and humanity. One reads those words in the Age of Korea, passing his fingers over them on the paper, as a blind man does Braille. "The primitive hydrogen bomb tested at Eniwetok . . . was between 150 and 250 times more powerful than . . . Hiroshima. . . . The fireball of the bomb would cause killing third-degree burns on exposed skin within an area of 300 square miles." *All who wage war . . .* One reads those words written by a gentle man who has lived in the Age of Warsaw and Dresden. *All who wage war . . .* In 1221 A.D. the Crusaders, retiring from Syria, stopped off in Egypt, set siege to the rich port of Damietta, and took it after 65,000 of its 75,000 inhabitants had died of starvation and plague. In 416 B.C. the Athenians offered the poor islanders of Melos the choice of alliance or massacre, and the Melians having refused

alliance on the ground of justice (to which the Athenians replied, "You and everybody else, having the same power we have, would do the same as we do"), they were massacred, except for the women and children, who were sold into slavery. Democratic America, Christian Europe, Periclean Greece. *All who wage war . . .* A pre-atomic countryman of Father Drinkwater's said, "He who mounts the wild elephant goes where the wild elephant goes."

My association with Holy Writ and with holy men left me, in the years immediately after the Second World War, where I was in the years immediately before.

And then came the Communist conspiracy.

Although I hoped (and still do) that I would never say so under duress, I was not then, and am not now, and never have been a Communist or a member of a Communist or Communist-front organization. It seemed



to me that totalitarianism, of which Communism was one form and Fascism and National Socialism others, was the consequence of many root evils; that the central evil of these was the failure of faith in God, which brought on many evils besides war; and that war spread totalitarianism. There was certainly more totalitarianism after the last two victorious world wars than there had been before they were won. On this extrapolation, it seemed to me that the totalitarians could afford to lose the wars, while the anti-totalitarians could not even afford to win them.

Communism now ruled half the world, not at all conspiratorially, but quite openly and aggressively. Who was this Communist? He was, according to the man who invented him, the proletarian, numbered in the hundreds of millions. He had nothing to sell but his labor; nothing to lose but his chains; no visible stake in the social order; and no inhibition against putting it to the torch. And it

was, of all things, war (not defeat, but war) which reduced men to this condition and produced proletarians. Thus, the more war—win, lose, or draw—the more Communism. And if war was the last resort against Communism, it was no resort at all.

But I had by now reached the advanced age where my country, at least in the beginning of the 1950's, did not want me to stand on my flat feet and fight. It wanted me only to buy the hire of healthy young men. Healthy young men, in America, in Russia, were a dime a dozen; my country wanted my dime. And so, if I were to sit *this* one out, I should have to withhold my dime, or some part of it, from my country. But this would be civil disobedience, which was not protected in the statutes of my own or any other country and, until the nature of the state should change, never would be.

This would be very deep water, indeed. I could not resist the violence of my country against my goods. I had to acquire goods to support my family; I had to earn money for the goods; and tax refusal was *in fact* impossible. Still, if I could not resist my country's violence, at least I could resist, and overcome, my voluntary support of it. My country would come and take what it wanted from me—and even get more, since interest would be charged on the unpaid portion of the dime, than it would otherwise get. But I should then be the unwilling victim of war, and not its accomplice. My young countrymen were unwilling victims; their contribution had to be seized. Why should I, their old countryman, batten on war, when they were dying of it?

MEANWHILE, I had spent a year on the faculty of a German university, studying the development of totalitarianism in the lives of people who have much more in common with us than the Russians have. I had learned that it was possible for a whole people, and a modern Western people at that, to “go” totalitarian, to invite a totalitarian dictatorship, and, alas, to enjoy it.

My study of Germany put me on my warning. The Germans in the '30's had not been able to see themselves as others saw them. I tried to see my own country as it was seen from outside in the '50's. The Western European—not just German—views I encountered were distressing. My country was no longer regarded as the land of the free, but as the land of the rich. It was no longer regarded as the home of the brave, but as the home of the hysterical. Other Western Europeans had learned from the German experience that anti-Communist militarism as a way of national life was ruinous. They were trying to avoid it, and they thought that we were not.

Western Europeans wanted to know what the difference was between the totalitarians' use of the word “freedom” to describe slavery and the Americans' use of the term “free world” to describe an alliance which

included, among others, the Communist regime of Yugoslavia and the fascist regime of Spain. They wanted to know if it was possible for us rich to understand the susceptibility of the very poor to totalitarianism and if we were interested in giving of our substance, and not of our unmarketable surplus, to reduce that susceptibility. They wanted to know if we were Christian, or even wise, to give people iron who asked for bread. They wanted to know if we could imagine—they knew we didn't know—what war is and whether we supposed that we had cut ourselves off so completely from European civilization that we could survive civilized with Europe burned up or, indeed, survive at all. Their questions were not heroic, but they were hard.

I came home, to my own country, convinced that my support of anti-Communist militarism, and of the evils of mistrust and of terror it had already induced, would encompass my country's ruin. This I could not, as a patriot, do. But I found that the minority actively opposed to war—to a war, this time, that would not end abroad—was much smaller than it had been in 1939. What was the reason?

My country had not in the beginning been strongly anti-Nazi, but it was strongly anti-Communist. That was one reason. My country had not seen Nazism as a deadly peril to its religious and economic systems, but it did so see Communism. For a century and a half identification of disturbers—“anarchists,” “socialists”—with Russia, had prepared my country for the day when my country and Russia would no longer be separated by Europe and Asia. That was another reason. And the spirit of militarism—against which President Wilson called us to war in 1917—had overtaken my country after being twice defeated in war. That was another reason.

Persons who talked for peace or worked for peace or prayed aloud for peace were disadvantaged and even, in places, mistreated. A voluntary totalitarianism, a dictatorship of nearly all the people, by nearly all the people, and for nearly all the people, was threatening my country. Many of the few Christians who opposed the Second World War turned out, to their own amazement, to have been peaceable toward Nazis, but not toward Communists, and many of the very few Jews who opposed war against the Nazis were hesitant now, in their always insecure situation, to oppose war against the Communists.

The going against war was tough. The need for discussion of the most serious matters was desperate, but discussion was being discouraged. Communism was a very serious matter, nothing less than a false religion. We were all against it, but what were we all *for*? What was the true religion with which Communism would be opposed, if it were to be opposed at all?

Underneath all the horrors of Communist—as of Fascist or Nazi—totalitarianism was something that made it a false religion and not just a false organization

of society. Underneath all the horrors of Communist totalitarianism was the communal principle of Jesus Christ's own congregation—a religious principle, perverted by violence as its means and misdirected toward the state as its end. And underneath all the blessings of capitalist parliamentarianism was the betrayal of the congregation by Ananias and Sapphira, the first Christians who tried to practice a little free enterprise on the side.

IN this dark confusion—in which only the bombs bursting in air give proof through the night that our flag is still there—I am compelled to conclude that the social revolution of the peaceable person is not the best hope of man—his choices are not so luxuriant as that—but his only hope this side of Paradise. But the social revolution, says Maritain, will be a moral revolution or it will not be at all; he does not need to add, as, I dare say, I do, that the moral revolution will be a religious revolution or it will not be at all, either.

All the kings' horses and all the kings' men could not divert the world from the course which has brought it to its present pass. What, then, can I do, one man? I can only change myself, with the help that horses and men have not given me, and change the world by only so much as I can change myself. If the League of Nations and the United Nations could not disarm the world by a single man, what can I do?—I can disarm the world by a single man.

Allegiance to my country, in this pass, certainly requires peaceable behavior of me. So does justice. But I say I would throw them both to the winds if God called me to war. Allegiance to God subsumes—and, if necessary, supersedes—allegiance to country. And I am too well aware of what was said to Job to let justice stand in the way of allegiance. If God called me to war, I would go. And so, I suppose, I am not a pacifist and never will be, but some sort of revolutionary still.

I cannot see that it was God who called us to the war that ended in Hiroshima. (If it was, He has since changed allies and enemies on us in the most frivolous fashion.) I see that He bade us to suffer with His suffering children, but not to inflict any suffering on any of them in any case. Vengeance, He said, was His. Nor can I see that it is He who calls us to the war that will end in Hiroshimas everywhere to perpetuate a system in which most of His children have been equally hungry slaves against a system in which all of His children would be equally hungry slaves.

After the abomination of desolation, we are told, there shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in the heavens, so bright that it can not be mistaken. Meanwhile we are told to be afflicted, but not to afflict, to be killed, but not to kill, to be hated, but not to hate, and to "endure unto the end."

The new technology of war, which may well achieve the abomination of desolation, could not possibly affect this prescription. The old technology was perfectly adequate to the purpose of men and nations that were bent upon blackening their souls. If the H-bomb kills a thousand innocents to the A-bomb's one, I shall not be guiltless because I have only killed one. Those who prophesied in olden times were not given cabinet posts unless, as one of them said, they prophesied smooth things, and those who prophesied in 1939 were lucky if the worst name they were called was Cassandra. But Cassandra was not supposed to be popular; she was supposed to be right, and she was.

Four hundred years before Christ the Greeks were enjoined by their teacher in Athens not to return evil for evil or to injure anyone at all. They put their teacher to death—he was an old man anyway—but it did them no good. Another and greater Teacher—as He warned His countrymen—came in his place four hundred years later. His teaching differed from the Greek's in that He spoke as one having authority. He did not ask questions. He issued commandments. I cannot believe that those who defy the greater Teacher will get off more lightly than those who defied the lesser.

It seems to be that I must sit this one out, too, more or less comfortably than last time, but much better consoled. There is a time to consider, and a time to temporize; a time to compromise, and a time to wonder; a time to yield, a time to wait, and a time to pray. All this I know. But there is a time, too, before a man's mouth is closed, to say no when he is offered the choice of two evils which are neither contradictory in themselves nor exhaustive alternatives.

THE LABOR MOVEMENT

The Durkin Experiment

WHEN Eisenhower appointed Martin Durkin Secretary of Labor, Senator Taft said, "An incredible appointment!" and he didn't care who quoted him. I said, "A very smart appointment," and I didn't care who quoted me either, but nobody did. It's just as well.

Durkin was president of the AFL Plumbers. He was a Stevenson Democrat, a Catholic, and a highly respected man in labor and other circles. With one move Eisenhower had done much to conciliate labor, Democrats and Catholics. It seemed smart.

But Senator Taft was closer to the truth than I. Taft

knew better than I that the millionaires wouldn't be able to get along with the plumber.

As Durkin himself told a friend, "Every time I entered a room, they all stopped talking."

For a time it seemed that Eisenhower the Great Conciliator could reconcile millionaires and plumbers. He could not. And therefore, from a practical political standpoint, the appointment was incredible and a mistake. Because now the Democrats have been given a splendid opportunity to say, "I told you so," and all the hostility of the labor movement to the Republican administration has been sharpened and fortified.

After Durkin resigned, he gave this explanation to Frank Edwards, a radio broadcaster who is sponsored by the AFL. It makes sense to me:

"Last February in the President's State of the Union message he notified the people that the Department of Labor was making a study of the Taft-Hartley law to determine what amendments should be made.

"The Department of Labor had made the study and made the report to the President. Later the Undersecretary of Labor and myself had met with the White House staff, as well as committee members—that is, the chairman of the House and Senate Labor committees and Senator Taft. After many meetings, covering many months, we arrived at some agreements on nineteen amendments to the Taft-Hartley law. We believed that the amendments would be the Administration position and I was informed later that they would not be the position. And therefore I submitted my resignation."

WHAT happened was that the amendments leaked out. Perhaps it was an intentional leak, a sort of trial leak, to find out whether the business community could stomach that kind of brew. At any rate the *Wall Street Journal* on August 3rd published the "complete text" of what it said was to be an eleventh-hour message by President Eisenhower to Congress. The story further said that conservatives among a handful of Congressmen who had seen the draft did not "relish" it and "if their advice is heeded it will never be transmitted." The message brought "screams from Taft-Hartley backers that the Eisenhower proposals, if enacted by Congress, 'would amount to repeal of the law'."

What were these amendments? George Meany, president of the AFL, has pointed out that Senator Taft duplicated twelve of them in bills that he introduced in 1949 and later.

One that Taft did not approve apparently was an amendment which would have given federal law precedence over state law. It would have had the effect of repealing laws in at least thirteen states which prohibit the union shop. These so-called "right-to-work" laws exist mainly in the Southern states and have proven a boon to sweat- and open-shop manufacturers.

Another one would have applied to the construction, amusement, maritime "or other industries in which employment is primarily casual, temporary or intermittent" and would have permitted employers to enter into pre-hire contracts with unions. Such contracts could contain a union shop provision under which workers might be required to join a union within seven days after beginning employment instead of the present thirty days.

As this column has tried to point out a number of times, one of the big weaknesses of Taft-Hartley is that it makes no allowances for such industries. The above amendment would have corrected this.

Another amendment would have wiped out the provision making it mandatory that the general counsel of the National Labor Relations Board make application for a federal court injunction against a secondary boycott. The now-dead message recommended that "no injunction or restraining order be allowed to be issued without notice and opportunity for hearing."

Eliminated from the ban on "so-called secondary boycotts" would be "corrected activities on a construction project." This would permit workers to picket a project where one of several contractors is in dispute with a union.

The message called for clarification and affirmation of a union's right to engage in "concerted activities directed at work being farmed out to other employers while employees who normally perform the work are on strike." This would allow workers to refuse to handle struck work.

Holding of a representation election would be prohibited for a period of four months after the commencement of a strike. This would strike a blow at the union-busting provision of Taft-Hartley which denied strikers the right to vote but gave it to strikebreakers. Eisenhower himself publicly attacked this gimmick in campaign oratory last fall.

Exclusion of supervisors from coverage of the Act would be restricted to "those who are truly supervisors and are the front line of management, representing it in day-to-day contact with workers." At present the law gives no protection to anyone who "responsibly directs" the work of another, a blanket that covers just about everybody and his brother.

Other amendments: union officials would no longer be required to file non-Communist affidavits (a recognition of the fact that no one has been more eager to sign these affidavits than the Communists); de-authorization of the union shop through elections would be eliminated; workers' authorization for deduction of union dues would continue indefinitely instead of the present year's time; notice by union or employer of intention to modify or terminate an agreement would be shortened to thirty days instead of sixty; and contracts would be locked up for the duration even on subjects not mentioned therein.

TWO further amendments struck me as ill-advised. One would have permitted employers to grant sole union jurisdiction over welfare funds. These fat funds are already proving too great a temptation to many union officers. Their administration should be tightened up, not loosened.

Another would make it possible for unions to expel members and have them fired from their jobs for disclosing "confidential information of the union" or for simply being one who the union "has reasonable cause to believe belongs to, or is in sympathetic association with the Communist Party or any organization advocating change in our form of government by other than Constitutional means." Such provisions are too easily abused by union autocrats who seize on any pretext to railroad their critics out of the union and out of their jobs.

But in general the amendments were fair, and necessary. Too fair apparently. Vice-President Nixon is the one who is supposed to have done the main hatchet job on them, with a major assist from Secretary of Commerce Sinclair Weeks.

At the AFL convention in St. Louis later in the month Vice-President Nixon took out his best bar of soft soap, but it was not good enough for the delegates. They sat on their hands, but hard, laughed sarcastically when Nixon said that the disagreement between Durkin and Eisenhower was "a misunderstanding," and gave their only enthusiastic applause to his statement that if the Eisenhower administration left the people with the conviction that it was serving "the greedy few, it would lose in 1956 and it would deserve to lose."

"THOSE WHO TAKE THE SWORD . . ."

SOME years ago this column ran several pieces on Tommy Lewis, czar of Building Service Employees Union, Local 32E, AFL. These pieces related how Lewis ran a high-handed racket, without benefit of financial reports, and featuring the expulsion of decent union members from their jobs *and their homes* (being mostly building superintendents, the members' homes went with their jobs) for no greater crime than calling attention to the mis- and malfeasances of Tommy Lewis.

Later Lewis organized the Yonkers Raceway and moved into the big money. Two men whom he insisted that the Raceway hire received over \$100,000 from the Raceway in the space of two years "to avoid labor trouble."

On August 28 an ex-convict fired five bullets into Tommy Lewis in the corridor of his apartment house. The murderer was in turn shot down by a cop while trying to escape. The consensus is that he was hired by somebody else to do the job.

JOHN C. CORT.

THE STAGE

THE STRONG ARE LONELY

WHAT I could discern of Fritz Hochwalder's drama beneath the glaze of baroque rhetoric and fustian which obscured its New York presentation was provocative and enthralling. The Austrian playwright—a singular figure, the most considerable dramatist his country has produced perhaps since Hofmannsthal—wrote the original version of "The Strong Are Lonely" in 1942, while interned at a Swiss labor camp. It had, subsequently, a European success of great magnitude, and has now been brought to this country by Margaret Webster and Eva LeGallienne.

It is immediately refreshing to note the spaciousness and ease of the work, the uncommon ability it has to elude that narrowing imaginative constriction which so often afflicts literature conceived under conditions of such duress. Experience is not here violated to fit neatly the demands of any symbolic or moral scheme; the life portrayed has its own consistency and interest and claim to the attention. Yet inevitably Hochwalder has dealt with ideology, and I can think of no postwar drama which has confronted the terrible solicitations of our age with so much probity and rectitude, such a valorous acquiescence in the tangle of aspiration and defeat we are pleased to call life.

The subject of "The Strong Are Lonely" is that strange "holy experiment" which the Society of Jesus instigated among the natives of Paraguay in the latter half of the eighteenth century: an attempt to establish an ideal community, ordered to the most generous measure of justice and charity one may anticipate within the limits of this world. The play takes the colony in the full tide of its success: then follows it down through a swift, tragic destruction by both temporal and ecclesiastical authorities grown resentful and suddenly concerned at the power "God's kingdom on earth" has become.

What distinguishes "The Strong Are Lonely" among other works on a similar theme is its dramatic vigor, and the seminal religious insight and dialectical intrepidity it displays: Hochwalder has gone beyond the conventional ironies (he contents himself, for example, neither with an essay on the vanity of spiritual pride, nor a simplistic moral portrait of the triumph of worldly malignancy) and created a truly *grasping* image of the permanent impact of idealism on society. No solution is suggested, there is even no *parti pris*: only the hard truth, rising out of the debris of so much human hope and sacrifice, that "each man alone must help create God's kingdom on earth."

A subtle illustration of the transposition these values suffered in the local production may be found in the

play's titular variations. Known originally as "The Holy Experiment," and in Paris as "Sur la Terre comme au Ciel," Miss Le Gallienne smoothed it out to "The Strong Are Lonely." The screw has been turned up one notch, from drama to melodrama, a pervasive distortion of the production, in which Miss Le Gallienne conspires. Her adaptation has competence rather than distinction; she has not found a dominating tone for the play, and its various dramatic styles clashed.

But Miss Webster was crucially responsible. "She evinces no bad taste," Stark Young once wrote of this director, "only, if you like, a quiet absence of taste. Her theatre virtues are solid and respectable; what she lacks is the aesthetic sense to any notable degree." I can find no evidence for revision of this judgment. Miss Webster's work here was strident and operatic, coarse-grained, deficient in sensibility. The center of the production moved irretrievably from the mind to the diaphragm, quite as if ideas, because they involve weight and pressure, also require the attendant support of the lungs. This misconception deflected even an actor of such integrity and perception as Wesley Addy; it granted Dennis King extravagant leeway for his charming if irrelevant diversions, and it cast Victor Francen in the mold of hysteria. With few exceptions, the remainder of the cast heroically maintained a level of dreary and remorseless inadequacy. You do not invoke an age of heroism and splendor with the dramatic equivalent of *The Parade of the Wooden Soldiers*.

But the paradox remains: that Miss Webster and Miss Le Gallienne, with whatever distortion, were engaged in an act which, ideally executed, would have brought great honor to our theatre, and a generous measure of stimulation to the intellectual audience.

But where was the intellectual audience? Not at the Broadhurst Theatre, I assure you, where "The Strong Are Lonely" closed after seven paltry performances. Only Mr. Eliot or Mr. Fry, or the Sadler's Wells Ballet, or musical events of some special *cachet*, will apparently provoke it out of a narcissistic contemplation of its own superior and unappreciated virtues. But this surrender by a significant group of a once honorable function will surely have repercussions in the state of our culture which one anticipates with dismay. In the meanwhile, the bloody victims accumulate, of which "The Strong Are Lonely" is a notable and tragic specimen. (*Closed at the Broadhurst*)

N.B. Readers of this column will please note that Dylan Thomas' verse play "Under Milk Wood" will receive two further readings by the author and the original cast on Saturday, October 24th, and Sunday, October 25th. The sponsor will again be the YMHA, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., New York City.

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY

VERY often it is the inexpensively-made little film that does most to brighten a reviewer's day. When Hollywood glamor wears thin, the independently-produced minor movie brings the star-surfeited reviewer down to earth and welcome reality. Such a film is "Little Fugitive," the best of a new batch of little films. Written and directed by Ray Ashley, Morris Engel and Ruth Orkin, "Little Fugitive" tells the unassuming story of a seven-year-old Brooklyn youngster who thinks he kills his brother (in what is the meanest practical joke of the year) and then runs away. Arriving at Coney Island, the kid forgets his horrible problem in the exciting atmosphere of chutes and carousels.

What makes "Little Fugitive" so remarkable is not that its leading actor, Richie Andrusco, is "better than Jackie Coogan," or any other child star, but that its directors have succeeded so admirably in capturing the feeling of a youngster on his own in a big and diverting place like Coney Island. It must have taken infinite patience on their part to photograph Richie doing all the things he does—as a cute youngster picking up empty coke bottles to make more money to get more rides and hot dogs, and as a lonely youngster in a foreign world when night falls (his mother is away, so only his twelve-year-old brother knows he's missing). Richie's portrayal of Joey will impress you for its independence of spirit; but "Little Fugitive" is most moving when Joey's older brother comes to Coney Island on the next day, loses sight of Joey on the crowded beach, and resourcefully leaves a chalk-written note on a wall: "Joey, I am not dead. Go the parachute and wait. Lennie."

The reunion of the two boys and their trip home in the rain is told in pure cinema. While "Little Fugitive" doesn't have the psychological depth or the variety of emotional problems raised in "The Quiet One," another fine off-beat movie about a boy, it is a film well worth seeing.

PRODUCTION-WISE, with its good Technicolor and handsome English settings, "The Titfield Thunderbolt" can't exactly be called a little movie. But the spirit of the script (by T. E. B. Clarke) and the light-hearted direction of Charles Crichton place this film in that category. On the surface, it's almost about nothing—if you can call a train nothing; but deep down it's about the pluck of the British—who, in this case, are determined to keep in operation the old railroad that runs between Titfield and Mallingsford.

The whole cast seems to be having a good time: Stanley Holloway as the town's man of wealth who likes to spend most of his time in the pub, George Relph as the vicar whose hobby is railroads, Godfrey Tearle as the bishop, and the others. At times the spree gets out of hand—as during a duel between the train and a steam roller, and in a later scene when the villainous bus operators cause a train wreck; but on the whole “The Titfield Thunderbolt” is good fun.

THE English have sent over another item that has its interesting episodes but as a whole doesn't quite jell. “Desperate Moment” will hold you during its chase sequences photographed in Germany, but when its plot gets over-melodramatic it also gets unbelievable. Dirk Bogarde and Mai Zetterling are attractive in the lead roles, and the story of hardships in post-war Germany deserves telling, but “Desperate Moment” fails to present its themes convincingly—and the thrills are those of a chase, and of a chase only.

WHEN the little film gets too coy, it meets its Waterloo. Another import from England, “Time Gentlemen Please!” starts out promisingly in the village of Hayhoe which has 99.9 percent employment. But when Hayhoe tries to take care of its one unemployed person by putting him in the almshouse, the rules for which were made some four hundred years ago, the movie gets unbearably precious. Since John Grierson produced it, one has a right to expect a film of some quality, but not even the good cast (including Eddie Byrne, Hermione Baddeley, Raymond Lovell) can save “Time Gentlemen Please!” from looking like an amateur effort.

FOR those who like the South Seas there is a new and authentic little movie, “Tanga-Tika,” which Dwight Long made in Tahiti. Although its story is simple boy-meets-girl, its native cast and fascinating local color stuff give it the atmosphere of the real thing.

It tells the story of the son of an island chief (played by Paul Meoe) who falls in love with an island girl (Adeline Tetahimuai) and almost loses her to a young Chinese while he's away trying to earn enough money for marriage. Although the color in this movie keeps fading and changing, and the acting frequently is amateurish, one has a feeling that the events are really happening. The fishing scenes, the games, dances, the wedding feast and the adventures of the hero when his ship is caught in a typhoon are extremely well done. No doubt most of the charm of “Tanga-Ticka” stems from its lack of Hollywood gloss.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

“NEW INDIAN LAWS”

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Regarding your editorial on New Indian laws [August 28, 1953], you are no better and no worse than the average Eastern editor who accepts government propaganda on the status of the American Indian. From 1798 when one of the first treaties was made which gave the land south of the Ohio River outside of towns and cities to the Indians, to the time in 1828 when gold was discovered in Dahlona, Georgia, and President Jackson ordered this treaty to be broken while seventeen thousand Indians were removed to live in Indian Territory “as long as the grass grows and the water flows,” to the time under Teddy Roosevelt when this land was stolen and made into the state of Oklahoma, the Indian policy of the government has been the breaking of one treaty after another.

As shown in the movie “Broken Arrow,” we violated a flag of truce in our dispute with the Apache leader Cochise. We later broke our treaty with the Apaches and stole land for the copper companies in Arizona when Governor Safford was Governor. We stole land from the Hopi under the regulation in 1943 of Section 6 and gave it to the Navajo, having previously given the best of the Navajo land for the use of white cattlemen.

We kidnapped Indian children and sent them to far-off mission schools. We disrobed men, women and children publicly, cut their hair and threw them unceremoniously in sheep vats; put their leaders in chains in dungeons, and later drafted their young men for war. One tribe put up a fight against all this and against the government plan of private allotment of lands and compulsory indoctrination in schools. This tribe is the Hopi in northern Arizona. Many of their young men went to prison rather than fight in a “white man's war.” They have lived on their mesas for a thousand years without government, laws, police or prisons, and except in the general rebellion against the Spanish in 1680, without a murder. Now coal and uranium and oil have been discovered beneath their land and the greedy white man plans to make them citizens of the state in order that their lands may be taxed and their resources despoiled.

These changes have been made against the wishes of the Indians. The inefficient Indian Bureau bureaucracy is far away in Washington and by its very clumsiness the Indian is somewhat protected. Now under the name of “freedom” the local Indian trader, the greedy cattleman, oil man, mine owner, and tricky politician is free to pounce upon the Indian. And all this in the name of democracy. Why should the Indian seek to be like a

white man? Let him leave us to our Coca-Cola civilization. The worthwhile Indian can take care of himself. Let the white man leave him alone.

AMMON HENNACY.

"FARMER'S DISCONTENT"

Whiting, Kan.

TO the Editors: Thank you for the excellent editorial, "Farmer's Discontent" [October 2, 1953.] May we have more of these sane appraisals of the rural situation? The farm segment has so few clear thinking spokesmen and the rank and file farmers are so rapidly giving in to defeatism, that some of us appreciate it more than you would believe when the problem is taken up.

However there is one sentence in your piece that baffles me: "If four Secretaries of Agriculture appear unable to present a convincing solution, it would be foolhardy for this magazine to—." Why do responsible people, in government and out, insist that the farm problem is a sectional issue? Now nobody knows better than the farmer that he is getting there with too much and too soon, but the provincial viewpoint will never solve the problem. Urban people admit that the farmer is necessary to the economy as a customer, so doesn't it stand to reason that he must have something to be a customer with? It should be turned over to the Department of Commerce or some agency for the study of food consumption and a closer scrutiny of middleman profit-taking. If there are so many people in this country existing on a marginal diet, then there is no surplus. But when beef on the hoof comes down fifty per cent and steak in the butcher's case comes down one per cent (literally true, locally) then there will always be a surplus. The reverse side of the farm problem is the problem of the living wage for more people. The country cousins may hang separately, temporarily, but all should remember that it is never long till they have plenty of company.

I found an old copy of *Harpers Magazine*—summer, 1929, and the date is significant—which included an article by Elmer Davis on the Federal Farm Board and what they called "farm relief." As Mr. Davis observed, the problem seemed to be whether to relieve the farmer or eliminate him. No doubt by the summer of 1931 the joke was pretty well over.

The farmer waits for rain—to boost the yield. The bigger the surplus, the lower the price, and the only way the individual can save himself is by increased volume, and the vicious cycle makes another round. Technocracy is king and his loyal subjects have made "two hills of corn grow where one bank of violets grew before." And I do mean corn!

MARY C. FORSTER.

ADDED ILLUSION

Passion in a New Dimension

JOHN P. SISK

IT might be hard to prove, but it strikes me that the decade we are completing is without parallel so far as the strain on the individual's vocabulary is concerned. It began with the war. By the middle of 1943 it was a rare person who could master the names of persons, places and things before they were dead, blown up or outmoded. Shortly there burst upon a bewildered public the confusion of sulfa, penicillin, chlorophyll, lanolin, cortisone and terramycin. Science was proliferating in all directions; peace brought no relief. The simple gear shift was replaced with the infinite categories of "matic" at about the same time that television began its inroads on the language. We had hardly comprehended rayon and nylon when there were Orlon, Dacron and Acrilon to contend with. In football the T-formation split up, regrouped itself and developed a nomenclature as involved as that of the New Criticism. When the H-bomb finally burst upon the world it found most of us terminologically slap-happy.

All this while the motion picture industry had been one of the few remaining areas where we could feel at home. It was almost a link with a simpler, freer past. Then suddenly the disease struck and in scarcely more than a year the public had been confronted with 3D, Cinerama, Anamorphoscopic, CinemaScope, Todd-a/o, stereophonic sound, panoramic screen and Super-Scope. I have heard tell of an elderly couple who, while watching a conventional picture, were struck with a certain effect of shadow on a corner of the screen and later asked the assistant manager if they had been seeing CinemaScope. The projection had been faulty. The story however apocryphal has meaning. The public is at last in the condition of a batter who has been hit too often: footloose at the plate because every pitch may be a bean ball.

The 3D audiences I have been part of have all been large, and have apparently felt that they were getting their money's worth. This was at first a surprise. One would have thought that the public was gadget- and gimmick-happy and that unless the pictures were very good (and they have proved to be very bad) audiences would quickly tire of the new process. Either there is more life in the novelty than some of us think or there is more at stake than mere novelty.

Mr. Sisk is a member of the English faculty of Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington.

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Still there is every reason not to be enthusiastic about 3D. The glasses are bothersome. The synchronization of images is often poor. The intermission halfway through the performance forces one to suffer twice as often the shuffling in and out of rows, the crushing of candy wrappers and the crunching of popcorn. Worse, the 3D films on the whole seem to be among the silliest ever made.

What strikes you if you see both conventional and 3D films on the same program (apart from the fact that the conventional film is probably better) is that the dimensional difference is **one of degree and not**, as the ballyhoo has led you to believe, **one of kind**. A Hollywood columnist defines 3D as "the only method that gives a real illusion of depth." I let go the distinction between real and unreal illusion (perhaps it is a stereoscopic distinction) to observe that movies have always given an illusion of depth. There have never been any "flat" movies so far as cinematic effect is concerned, unless you are speaking of the image as it exists on the screen, in which case they are all equally flat.

But because of this "real" illusion of depth, and because of the stereophonic sound accompaniment, 3D has one definite advantage over conventional movies. It is easier for it to involve the audience in the action. The rejected cigarette butt flips past your ear, the tiger leaps on you, the gorgeous heroine seems about to melt in your arms, the corpse tumbles into the orchestra, cattle stampede over you, the villain fires his gun in your face, the dying man crawls into your lap, clutching frantically at your popcorn as he expires. It can be very crude and vulgar and irritating. One remembers the all-super-singing, colored stereoscopic "feely" with synchronized scent-organ in Huxley's *Brave New World*, which was offered to the inhabitants of Utopian London as an experience-surrogate and of which the embarrassed Savage says, ". . . this horrible film."

Embarrassment is a proper reaction in our very non-Utopian America. Such intimacies are an invasion of privacy and suggest titillating peep-shows in penny arcades. They violate a compact: the implicit agreement, on the part of the audience to remain in the seats, on the part of the actors to remain on the stage. When audience and actors intermingle the essential tension between the two breaks down; the result may be orgy, nightmare or ecstasy but it is not drama. When the action spills into the audience there is an implicit admission of failure on the part of the actors, just as there is in the off-color jokes of a magician who can't get by on his shoddy legerdemain. In the theater there is an irony that underlies all ironies; it is the awareness on the part of all parties concerned that it is only a play: not an action but an imitation of an action.

A CLASSIC EXAMPLE of 3D's ability to involve an audience in the direct way of a lynching or a bear

baiting is "The House of Wax," which stars Vincent Price and a variety of cadavers. In this film violence is exploited with almost lyric intensity. The audience of which I was a part was kept in a constant uproar that must have been something like the audience-response to Dada. All the involving gimmicks were used. It is hard to imagine how the grisly and the horrible could be more directly experienced. In the final scene, where the mad disfigured sculptor attempts to mold the frantic heroine in hot wax to immortalize her beauty, the sadistic possibilities of 3D are frighteningly apparent. For most of the audience it was a horrible and fascinating action they had been swept into, the way pedestrians are swept into the blood and agony of a sudden street accident. If you had escaped the orgiastic participation you felt dirtied, as if in the atmosphere of perversion.

Hollywood in whatever dimension has always striven for something like this. I don't mean that it has always striven for sadism, but that it has in most of its efforts acted to break down the audience's awareness that it is only a play. It has always calculated shrewdly the maximum involvement of the audience. Using sentimental and sensational devices, it builds into its productions the potentialities for a complete audience commitment. It strives to involve the audience not as an emphatic observer of the imitation of an action but as the participant of an action, as if it were a tribe of primitives huddled entranced before a ritual fertility dance. Hence the disillusion of some people when they visit a Hollywood set and see that the cloud capp'd towers and gorgeous palaces are all an insubstantial pageant: in their hearts they were not prepared for such deception. Hence the financial failure of so many genuinely adult movies. They make sense only to an audience capable of a measure of ironic detachment, and the industry has been systematically destroying this audience.

But this is to put it negatively. Positively speaking, Hollywood has been creating the kind of audience it needs: one that identifies action with passion. "The effect of this is to destroy the distinction between art and life. . . . Here, if anywhere, one may see the theater actually making the passionate action of the tribe." The words are Francis Fergusson's and they refer to a Nazi propaganda film but they are appropriate here. Indeed, if one wishes to see what Hollywood has been up to all along, whether it is aware of it or not, there is no better reading than the chapter on "Tristan and Isolde" in Mr. Fergusson's *The Idea of a Theater*. Behind 3D and behind 2D, except in its rarer moments, there is the commitment to passion that Denis de Rougemont has traced to the heresy of Catharism—except that in the movies the commitment is sentimental and sensational, without the "mystique" and "theology" of the Cathars, or of Wagner, to give it structure and clear purpose. It is an ambiguous flirting with dimly perceived gods, no less dangerous because it is not articulated into dogma

and creed. What keeps us from seeing this more clearly is the camouflage of lip worship to conventional morality and Christianity.

FROM this point of view it seems clear to me that 3D represents in a state of hyperbole what Hollywood has been working towards since the days of "The Great Train Robbery." I don't mean that 3D is a logical termination; with luck and inventive ingenuity (and enough competitive assistance from TV) much can still be done. Something of an illusion is still left; the audience is not yet completely involved. There are still vast unexploited areas in the erotic and sadistic.

The immense popularity of TV is supposed to have stimulated these advances. For a while there was reason



to believe that the competition was just what Hollywood needed. It had been too certain of its hold on the public for its own good; it had been able to concern itself too much with quantity. TV would relieve it of the burden of B pictures; it could concentrate on fewer A productions. The catch, of course, is that for Hollywood an A picture is more often than not a B picture with a larger budget. Besides, to date TV is not the right kind of competition. It is only a shoddier version of its antagonist. It is an unflattering commentary on the caliber of American audiences when Hollywood can assume that TV is a gimmick that can be successfully fought with other gimmicks. It is as though two traders were maneuvering for the business of a native village, the one offering brass rings, the other brass rings with bells on them.

The underlying assumption here is the naive one that haunts our civilization: that any technical advance is an unqualified advantage. If 2D pictures are so good 3D pictures will automatically be better; if pictures are so effective on a conventional screen they will be more effective on a wider screen. But every technical advance is also a disadvantage and a handicap, and until it can be properly put to work you are worse off than you were without it. The physical size of the panoramic screen will only emphasize the triviality of poor drama.

One must be fair to the new dimension. The depth treatment can be unquestionably effective. The possibilities of it flash through at the most unlikely moments: a casual overhead shot of a city street, a close-up adroitly but unobtrusively handled, a bit of background business startling enriching the scene of action, a landscape lying away wonderfully. It would be nice to see a travelogue in 3D, I thought watching "Last Chance," and wished that the actors with their absurd story would get out of the way so that I could see more of what was supposed to be Rio. As this is written a Popeye cartoon in 3D is being shown in some parts of the country. Here may be a real future for the process. What is crude and intrusive in a picture representing live human beings might prove acceptable and entertaining in the abstract and stylized drama of the animated cartoon, which by its very nature must keep the audience at an ironic distance.

But it is hard to be very optimistic. One keeps hearing J. Walter Rubin of Loew's, as reported in Lillian Ross' *Picture*: "I don't care too much what kind of picture we make. When a picture is liked in this office it is liked everywhere. What Mr. Schenk is in favor of we are for. All of us here like the kind of pictures that do well at the box office." Hollywood apparently sees its future in terms of processes and techniques that will involve the audience more and more.

The conditioner of such a concept of drama is the need for passion, but it is also boredom; theater is conceived as an effective relief from boredom, as a stimulant—even as a religion-surrogate after the fashion of the Solidarity Service in *Brave New World* ("Wasn't it wonderful?" said Fifi Bradlaugh. "Wasn't it simply wonderful?" "). The more you are taken out of yourself, the more intensely you feel, the better the show. And since the capacity for boredom is unlimited, Hollywood must look to a constant perfection of techniques and processes that will enable it to keep one passionate jump ahead of boredom. The bells must ring louder and louder or the ivory will stay in the huts.

What is wanted is something like what TV would be if there were complete kinesthetic and sensuous intimacy with the wrestlers—an algolagnic orgy of which "I, the Jury" is only a faint intimation. Any stop short of Huxley's feelies and synchronized scent-organ is unthinkable. Let the savages be embarrassed if they will.

A Coming of Age in South Africa

THE LYING DAYS. By Nadine Gordimer. Simon & Schuster. \$3.95.

By RICHARD HAYES

MISS Nadine Gordimer draws title and theme of her first novel from a melancholy quatrain of Yeats, "The Coming of Wisdom With Time:"

Though leaves are many, the
root is one;
Through all the lying days of
my youth
I swayed my leaves and flowers
in the sun;
Now I may wither into the
truth.

Something of that lyric's wry and perfect surface, its elegance and sobriety, has invaded Miss Gordimer's prose. A young South African girl, she published last year a volume of short fiction distinguished and impressive, but tentative. What these stories disclosed was a sensibility tremulous and exacerbated, slowly feeling its way out of numbness and pain into sentience. But in the interval, Miss Gordimer's writing has taken on particularity and shape, an impeccable clarity of focus and a poetic texture of range and intensity. She excels in (even abuses) the power of generalized statement, and her control of scene is considerable. A fastidious taste governs her mind, and as a dramatist of the subtle impingement of place on a reflective consciousness, she seems to me unequalled.

The theme of *The Lying Days* is the turbulent adolescent passage into wisdom and reconciliation: the hardest subject of all, exhausted, a plundered vein. One thinks of the battlefields of the novel, littered with its majestic prizes: Joyce, Maugham, Lawrence, Hemingway, Carson McCullers. Yet this is, in the genesis of every novelist, the book which *must* be written: in it old wounds are assuaged, the personal quarrel aired, the history of the self recorded in its reeling collision with time and the world. Miss Gordimer solicits the attention with a portrait sure and eloquent: no one will dis-

pute the authenticity of this grave and humorless young heroine, immensely touching in her over-riding egotism, blindly groping into the adult world of love and responsibility and human commitment. Indeed, in Miss Gordimer's drawing of her shy response to the charm and pleasure of the sensuous, physical world, the novel achieves a kind of hazy bloom of perfection which cannot but be called masterful.

When the center of her narrative moves, however, from the idyllic pastoral landscape—a tissue of life beautifully rendered—to the complex implications of an urban scene, Miss Gordimer's writing declines in chastity and poise. I would ascribe this softening to an improper discrimination the novelist has made between the two imaginative modes of recollection and re-creation. She has indulged herself with remembrance, and in consequence her subject, which importunes the shaping of art, is bound only by the tenuous unity of personality. She cannot dominate her experience—the venomous family ruptures, the slow attritions of a compulsive love affair—because she does not exist at a sufficient distance from it; the page is still freshly dusted with the heat and squalor of battle.

Nor has Miss Gordimer, with absolute success, imposed her private drama on the larger context of South African actuality. This is, of course, a generous, possibly a noble, failure. In the humiliating presence of *apartheid*, under the sullen eye of Dr. Malan, how is one even to sustain the illusion of personal worth? With guilt suppurating at every pore of a society, to counsel the refinements of moral taste is tantamount to an act of frivolity. Numbness or hysteria would seem to be the logical alternatives, and for all the tact of her conscience and the restraint of her art, Miss Gordimer has completely eschewed neither.

Yet conceding the difficulties inherent in her subject, a steady current of disappointment must under-

lie one's response to this novelist's finally inadequate imaging of the truths of her experience. We assent in the unbreached integrity of her spirit, and we accept the hard wisdom to which time at last brings her by pain. But too much of that journey has been imperfectly dramatized: Miss Gordimer has found no central situation in which her experience may cohere and reverberate. And out of what must be assumed as a kind of aesthetic exhaustion, she has neglected to explore the imaginative possibilities of certain areas of her material—the raffish Bohemian coterie which influences her heroine, for example—which provide admirable arenas in which to test the validity of the private sensibility.

I would suggest then, in full awareness of the impertinence here involved, that a more relentless attention to the formal exactions of the fictional convention would give Miss Gordimer's next work the precision and structural power in which *The Lying Days* is deficient. She is, wonderful to say, a novelist in whom sensibility is not debilitating, but a strong, enriching and affirmative force; and the special conditions of her life—her ambiguous position as a humane spirit in a society courting disaster—may at the last be her salvation as a writer, by presenting her with a raw imaginative substance of richness and implication. It is only because she herself is a talent of so austere and primary an order, and has set so intransigent a mark of excellence, that she is able to invoke in us the impulse of enthusiasm and concern.

Regional Love

THE CATALANS. By Patrick O'Brian. Harcourt. \$3.50.

By GEORGE MILES

IN *Testimonies*, his first novel, Mr. O'Brian created some wonderful characters and an impressive and

credible story of love in the Welsh mountains. His novel brought good words from such perceptive and talented people as Eudora Welty and Delmore Schwartz.

His second novel is drawn in as uncommon a locale as his first, and again it is basically a story of love. There are, however, other emotions, other passions, when this man writes of love. Xavier Roig, mayor of the small French town where the action proceeds has fallen in love with a trade girl much younger than himself. His cousin, Alain, a doctor, has been called home to assist the other relatives in their attempts to prevent Xavier from marrying the girl. The events, the conversations, which develop the story are viewed from Alain's position.

The girl's family, a group of store keepers, the mayor's relatives, effete landowners, are introduced as the background is lined in and the special temperamental qualities of the Catalans are recreated.

By means of extended dialogue the sterility of Xavier's life is made plain. He had never been loved by his father or his wife or his son. He was intensely conscious of the lack of love in his life and determined to make up for this lack. He would bestow his love on this good, simple, beautiful town girl.

Throughout the greater part of the book the situation is viewed without an understanding of the girl's feelings. Her position is taken for granted by the relatives and by Xavier. But Xavier is a sort of eternal husband who has directed his final, purifying act of love at a woman who cannot accept his love or offer hers. Xavier's egoism produces a Proustian emotion which is destined to be thwarted and left free of its intended resting place. Ultimately it is the young, romantic cynic, Alain, who carries the fair girl away.

This book is certainly a civilized thing. From its descriptions and its dialogue and its incidents, the reader is made aware of an intelligent viewpoint, a real sensibility and a reasonable judgment. But it exhibits none of the intensity or scope of *Testimonies*. It lacks the power of characterization which marked the first

book. No one here makes any definite impression; no act or conversation conveys the personal reality which was exhibited by Bronwen of the earlier story, for example. None of the secondary figures is as forcefully shaped as the grandparents were in that book.

And, in general, the treatment fails to transmit the air of closeness which marked the other book. Consequently the story takes on an insignificant flavor, and the difficulties of Xavier and the reflections of Alain

and the would-be colorful regional setting appear as trifling items.

The lack of conviction seems to have its effect on Mr. O'Brian's style: a certain strain is evident. Nevertheless he often employs a highly effective measure which reminds one of Mauriac—of isolating sentences and phrases in a speech which is partly heard because of distance or drowsiness of confusion. But Mr. O'Brian does not demonstrate this power so often that it overcomes other important deficiencies in *The Catalans*.

Backgrounds of the American Church

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE AMERICAN IDEA. By Theodore Maynard. Appleton-Century-Crofts. \$3.50.

By JOHN J. KANE

HOW true is it that America is a Protestant country, in which

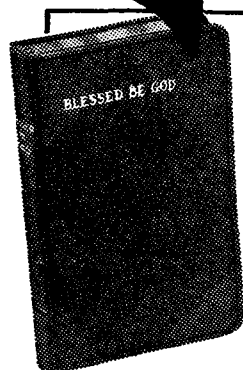
Catholics are "outsiders" here on sufferance? Theodore Maynard attempts to answer this question in his latest book. His reply is a welding of the history of the Catholic Church in America with some flattering statements about immigrant

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groups and an appraisal of Catholic contributions to education, culture, politics, labor and the American spirit. The book reveals as much about the author as it does about the problem. One comes to feel that here is a kindly, courteous man, permeated with such a deep sense of charity that at times it somewhat blunts his objectivity, results in some understatements about Protestant-Catholic relations and some overstatements about ethnic groups, especially the Irish. Yet Maynard has set a tone for approaching this difficult, complex problem of Protestant-Catholic relations that might well be emulated by spokesmen on both sides.

The author paints with a wide brush on a large canvas, and one wishes that he might have sketched in more detail. For instance, he says Irish priests showed no great inclination to go beyond seaboard towns, consequently few Irish immigrants went West. It would be more correct to say that few Irish went West for lack of money, while sparseness of Irish Catholics there

and their density in cities, indicated urban residence for priests. He cites the dramatic incident of Bishop John Hughes rising at a mass meeting to condemn establishment of an Irish colony in the West. He does not mention, however, that in this instance at least the Bishop's intervention was very fortunate. The projected settlement was to use Gaelic as the language, streets would be named after saints, the main thoroughfare to be known as St. Patrick Street, and in general Irish customs would have been observed. Such a colony might have ended in a cultural pocket, effectively preventing any assimilation of the Irish. Later Mr. Maynard does cite the economic reason for Irish urbanism.

The Catholic Church and the American Idea is more the work of an artist than of a scientist. The term 'race,' for instance, is almost constantly misused; Irish clergy are held to have been "providentially" predominant; the administrative ability of the Irish is extolled as well as their desire for democratic

institutions. The German bishops, on the other hand, resisted assimilation of German Catholics, he claims. The same charge could be leveled at some Irish bishops, notably John Hughes. It depends on the period of history about which one is writing. Maynard is strong for assimilation but feels that immigrant groups should retain their traditions and their languages, at least as second languages. He admits, however, he does not know just how this can be effected, a statement most sociologists would have to echo. To prove amalgamation of American Catholic immigrants, he cites the names of forty-seven seminarians whose immigrant parents had intermarried with other immigrant groups. Statistically such a small number proves nothing. The diocesan clergy, he says, are drawn from the lower but not the lowest class of families. The higher classes are more likely to enter religious orders. No evidence for these statements is offered.

Yet despite these criticisms, Maynard has provided a book that

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America should read. It lacks the scholarship of, say, Ray Allen Billington's, *The Protestant Crusade* but it is for popular, and one hopes wide, consumption. It will provide both Catholics and Protestants with a picture of American Catholicism too little known. Because he has done so much in so few pages, Mr. Maynard must be pardoned some of his lapses. One unfortunate as-

pect of his writing, however, is a tendency to leap back and forth in time. It is reminiscent of a time machine whose dials are twisted haphazardly, and the reader must catch his breath and then make the jump. Historians and sociologists may quarrel with some points in the book, but a careful reading of it may help lessen current quarrels between Protestants and Catholics.

The Problems of Italian Democracy

THE UNITED STATES AND ITALY. By Stuart Hughes. Harvard. \$4.

By JOSEPH CALDERON

MR. Hughes has written an informative introductory book on Italian political life as seen from a liberal viewpoint. He writes in an easy popular style. *The United States and Italy* is not a thorough or authoritative book but its author is a reliable guide, sympathetic, knowledgeable and objective. He discusses Italian parliamentary his-

tory, fascism, anti-fascism, the Church, Italian participation in World War II, Christian Democracy, economic and population problems of Italy, Italian recovery, Italy's role in the Atlantic Community, and the American stake in Italy.

This would have been a more valuable book if Mr. Hughes had discussed in more adequate detail the far-reaching influence of bureaucracy in Italian life. It is this ill-paid, inefficient and antiquated group which runs Italy. Members of the bureaucracy draft the laws, get them passed, apply the laws, and interpret them, too. The government and people are, for all practical purposes, powerless to control bureaucracy. There are enough members of the bureaucratic class in parliament to prevent the passage of any law which whittles down their privileges and immunities.

The author could have gone into greater detail in respect to the tremendous accomplishments of De-Gasperi in land reform, industrial revival, in housing, road building, and the building of ships, dams, aqueducts, power and steel plants—a wonderful story which has yet to be written in English. A chapter on Italian Communism would have enhanced the value of the book, describing, for instance, how it subsidizes the Nenni-socialist organization and publications, how it makes millions of dollars annually through its import-export firms, and how and why it is gaining converts among the impoverished people of Southern Italy. The Communists in Italy have poisoned political life;

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they have made opposition to the Christian Democratic government virtually traitorous. There is no loyal opposition in the Italian parliament and this makes the governing of Italy, and Italian progress, very difficult.

On one side are the Communists, with their Nenni-socialist allies, and on the other are the revolutionary neo-fascists and the anti-constitutional Monarchists. All of these are united in a conspiracy to overthrow not only the present government, but Italian democracy. As for the democratic splinter parties, the Social Democrats, Liberals and Republicans, they suffer from a woe-ful lack of leadership and following. The truth of the matter is that there are only two political parties in Italy that count—the Communists and the Christian Democrats. If the latter were to fall, Italy would pass over to Soviet Russia.

It seems to me that Mr. Hughes overestimates such Italian figures as Parri and Nenni. Parri is incompetent, and Nenni a shrewd windbag controlled by the Com-

munists (he was given the Stalin peace prize). Saragat is another leader who has been overpriced. He is weak, lacks nerve and a practical sense of realism. Democratic Socialism has no future in Italian politics because it has no leadership worthy of the name.

It's a pity that the author did not devote more space to Italian-American relations and Italy's importance to American security. It is surely in America's interest to see that Italian democracy survives and flourishes. The Communists are gaining adherents all the time. They control thirty-six percent of the vote now, and are getting stronger.

Italian democracy needs greater American understanding. It needs this more than it needs dollars. Mr. Hughes suggests that we help Italy by lowering tariff barriers and by permitting a temporary influx of Italians to relieve the population pressure upon the already strained Italian economy. He is on the right track. Italy needs to export products and labor. She needs trade, not aid. The author also suggests that we

assist Italy in the vast and highly important job of industrializing southern Italy. This is sound and will pay off in the long run.

On the diplomatic level we could help Italy by persuading Tito to consent to a plebiscite in Trieste. Our state department has worked long and hard on this question and has not succeeded. We must try once again and this time we must succeed. The Trieste problem is contributing to the rise of fascism, monarchism, neutralism and anti-Americanism in Italy. The sooner it is settled, the better for freedom. The Christian Democrats have sustained grave defeats because of Trieste. DeGasperi, that great Italian, good European and sincere friend of the United States, fell from power because of the Trieste problem. Time is running short. The Italian moderates cannot hope to hold the line indefinitely while the Trieste problem continues to bedevil Italian life. And if the political center (the Christian Democratic party) falls from power, the United States can kiss Italy goodbye.

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The Nearness of Two Worlds

GRATEFUL TO LIFE AND DEATH. By R. K. Narayan. Michigan State College Press. \$3.

By ANNE FREMANTLE

MR. NARAYAN's first novel, *The Financial Expert*, was a delicious comedy, subtle and gay. His second book, about a teacher of English in a college in India, is one of the rare novels dealing with marriage which suggests the truly sacramental nature of the physical relationship. The hero, Krishna, his lovely wife, Susila, and Leela, their little daughter; his parents, her parents, the old family retainers; his colleagues, his friends, the little dusty town where they all live, are delicately chiseled, and the over-all impression is of a filigree carving, in sandalwood or ivory. We see, and smell, the jasmine that Susila always wears, and that is her own identification, the delicious meals she cooks, the horrible stench of the filth that gives her the typhoid from

which she dies, and the garlands his friends hang on Krishna when, at the tale's end, he resigns his job, and decides to devote himself to running an eccentric school for small children.

Susila's long illness and death are heartbreakingly described, as are Krishna's stupid, tender clumsiness, and, at the last, his tragic unawareness. Because the fever has fallen he thinks Susila will now recover. So he takes their child for a walk with a small, chattering companion. When they return, the doctor's car is at the door. After telling the distraught husband to "expect a change in about two and a half hours, the doctor turned and walked off. Krishna stood stock still, listening to his shoe creaks going away, the starting of his car; after the car had gone, a stony silence closed in on the house, punctuated by the stentorian breathing, which appeared to [him] the creaking of the hinges of a prison

gate, opening at the command of a soul going into freedom."

The dull emptiness, the true hell that is the pain of loss, are movingly recounted. Not since Jules Romains' *Le Dieu des Corps* has any novel attempted to express the intimacy of the souls of those whose bodies are married. And Mr. Narayan conveys this without ever alluding, even indirectly, to physical love: it is a tour de force, as perfect as it is pure.

The second part of the book describes Krishna's gradual return to life. One day he gets a letter from a stranger "for Krishna whose wife Susila has recently passed over." She wishes to communicate with him, and has chosen this way to do it. Later she teaches her husband how she can reach him directly, and, when he has learned by experience how near the two worlds are, and yet how far apart, he realizes that Susila's nearness, their child's happiness, and a life of recollection are all he needs. So, when his grandmother takes the child to rear her, he and his friends decide to live to-

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The loss of Susila, found again on another level, is echo of the first Krishna's love for Sita and also of Orpheus and Eurydice in our own tradition. Mr. Narayan has written a story for which we, like his hero, may be "grateful."

REVIEWERS

George Miles contributes frequently to this magazine.

John J. Kane is head of the department of Sociology at the University of Notre Dame.

Joseph Calderon is a New York attorney specializing in Italian affairs.

STATEMENT REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233) SHOWING THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION OF THE COMMONWEAL, published weekly, at New York 16, N. Y., for October 9, 1953.

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EDWARD S. SKILLIN,

Editor.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 30th day of September, 1953.

Vincent J. Moses, Notary Public
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MARITAIN

In 1933 Jacques Maritain first wrote for The Commonweal. The article was "A Note on the Bourgeois World," and it included a remark of considerable significance to the body of Maritain's work, and, in a way, to the work of this magazine. He said: "Now we are actually assisting at a historical event of considerable importance: what may be called the Christian diaspora—I mean the temporal Christian family or collectivity scattered among the nations, the Christian laity if you will—is beginning to have an explicit, conscious, deliberate awareness both of its own cultural mission and the proper reality of the social world as such."

Maritain's contributions to The Commonweal, twenty-five articles published between 1933 and the present, have centered on the assistance at this "historical event." They have dealt with such subjects as education, philosophy, racism and anti-Semitism, war and the problems of democracy. Together they doubtless embody a statement of greater importance than anything else this magazine has published.

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